

# ILLUSTRIOUS

The 62nd Eastercon: 22nd — 25th April 2011



The Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham, UK

Progress Report Two

# From the Chair

Hello, and welcome to PR 2. Here at Illustrious HQ we're working non-stop behind the scenes to pull together what we hope will be a very enjoyable convention programme, and I'm happy that we can start revealing some of the highlights to you within these pages.

If you're not familiar with the work of our Poet Laureate Roz Kaveney, Tony Keen has written an excellent introduction to both her poetic and other works. We have two articles relating to our 'SF through the ages' theme, a review of the history of space art by artist Ed Buckley (who also very kindly produced our cover) and the first part of Dave Lally's history of televisual SF. Both of these are topics we'll be picking up within our programme.

Smuzz and Alex will be running a brand new Beyond Cyberdome, this time as a team activity, so we look forward to the traditional chaos and mayhem from that quarter. For those desiring a slightly more abstract gaming experience, following on from the Battlestar Galactica games at recent Eastercons we have a Firefly LRP. If I wasn't going to be spending a lot of time running around with my 'chair' hat on I'd be very tempted by that one myself.

Thanks to everyone who's contributed to this, and to everyone who's contributing to the con organisation. For now, though, happy reading!

*Nik Whitehead*

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# A Quick Summary

## **Our Dates and Location:**

22nd — 25th April 2011

The Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham, UK

## **Our Guests of Honour:**

David Weber: Author

Peter F. Hamilton: Author

David A. Hardy: Artist

Roz Kaveney: Poet

Vince Docherty: Fan

## **Our Committee and Senior Staff:**

Nik Whitehead: Chair

Fran & John Dowd: Finance & Membership team

John Harold: Services

Richard Crawshaw: Hotel Liaison

Dave Mansfield: Programme

Becky Duty: Guest Liaison

James Bacon: Dealers' Room

Robbie Bourget: Art Show

Mad Elf: Website & Publications

## **Our Contact Details:**

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[www.illustrious.org.uk](http://www.illustrious.org.uk)

# Roz Kaveney

## *First Eastercon Poet Laureate*

Many people in the world of sf know, or know of, Roz Kaveney. They know Roz Kaveney the critic, reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* and elsewhere. They know the author of *From the Alien to the Matrix*, *Teen Dreams* and *Superheroes!*, and editor of volumes on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Battlestar Galactica* (and coming soon, *Nip/Tuck*), the Roz Kaveney who coined such terms as the Geek Aesthetic and the Big Dumb Narrative Object, the Roz Kaveney who writes accessibly, wittily, but always seriously about popular culture that other critics would dismiss as trivial. They know Roz Kaveney the fiction writer and editor, who put together the Midnight Rose Collective (other members of which included Neil Gaiman and Mary Gentle), responsible for such collections as *Temps* and *Villains!* They know Roz Kaveney the activist on LGBT issues, who as a member of the Trans Parliamentary Forum was involved in the formulation of the Gender Recognition Act, and now regularly writes on these issues and more in *Comment is Free* section of the website of *The Guardian*, and elsewhere. They know Roz Kaveney the unashamed author of fanfic. If they are really lucky, they know the Roz Kaveney whose erudition and wit have brightened up many a social gathering.

Until recently, not many have known Roz Kaveney the poet. Roz wrote poetry while a student at Oxford in the 1960s, but stopped almost completely after 1974. Around 2003, she began again, in a small way, and the death in 2006 of John M. Ford, himself a highly-regarded poet, prompted a verse response. Since then Roz has rediscovered poetry to such an extent that it is now a major part of her creative output, and readers of her LiveJournal (<http://rozk.livejournal.com>), or those who follow her on Facebook, are regularly treated to her verses. If we're unlucky, we sometimes have to wait for a week.

Roz's current *magnum opus* (and I use the Latin tag advisedly) is a collection of versions of the poems of Catullus, Roman poet of the first century BCE; at present most of the short poems have been completed, and she is beginning work on the longer ones (often overlooked in selective translations). This project was begun after she had done some



versions of Sappho (in response to ridiculous assertions that Sappho was not queer). It is important to emphasize (as she would) that her renditions of Sappho and Catullus are 'versions', not translations. Roz reads Latin, but prefers the freedom to abandon a strict literal translation (I write as if such a thing were possible) for a version that gets to the heart of what Catullus is saying. Let's take, as an example, her version of Catullus 26:

The cottage you have outside town  
is of such rustic dwellings the crown  
O Furius you'll find  
you don't need an ill wind  
It's the mortgage will blow your house down.

Now, you probably haven't read the original, so you'll have to take my word for the following. This version is, by Roz's own admission, 'loose'. But it is also perfect — it distils Catullus' original down to its essence, and makes it comprehensible to an audience that knows nothing of Catullus' life and times. According to Roz, this is because she recognises what few others seem to — that a lot of the time Catullus is actually joking with his readers.



But the collection of Catullus versions forms merely the largest part of Roz's current work. In the last year or two she has also produced poems for Transgender Remembrance Day, poems about the death of her close friend Abi Frost, a cycle of poems inspired by her visit to the British Museum's exhibition on the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, and more besides. Most recently, she has produced a sequence of poems written around the Orpheus myth.

She has also rediscovered the delights of poetic structure. Where once she wrote in free verse, she now rhymes, and obeys metre. Many of her poems are in the form of the Shakespearian sonnet, using fourteen lines, the iambic pentameter, and the thematic turn, or '*volta*'. It is a form into which the ideas of Catullus fit surprisingly well.

Roz Kaveney is a fine poet, and an excellent choice for Eastercon's first Poet Laureate. We look forward to the new works she will no doubt compose specially, and to hearing her read out her work.

*Tony Keen*

# Hotel Update

The hotel is the Birmingham Metropole which is adjacent to Birmingham International railway station and airport. It is also easily accessed from junction 6 of the M42.

To get from Birmingham International airport or railway station to the hotel it is a short walk of about 15 minutes through the NEC. All level changes have lifts, and in most cases escalators. There will be a full description of the route in PR3.

## Meal Times

Breakfast	7:00 am	to	11:00 am
Lunch	11:30 am	to	2:30 pm
Dinner	5:30 pm	to	8:30 pm
Late-night food	11:00 pm	to	midnight (approximate)

## Dietary Requirements

If you have any particular dietary requirements please let me know; this includes vegetarians. This information will be held in strict confidence and personally identifiable details will not be passed on. It will be used to define the range and amount of food available to satisfy dietary needs. If you have a dietary requirement and you don't let me know then we might not be able to ask the hotel to cater for you, and there might not be enough of what you want to eat!

## Accommodation with Children

Under 15s accommodation is free if they are sharing with an adult. If they are in a connecting or separate room there is a 50% discount off the adult rate. If two adults are staying with one or two children the most efficient rate at the Hilton should be to book two rooms and each adult shares with one child; this will work out as two single rates. If the children have their own room then there will be three double rates (two adults plus two children at 50% of the adult rate); or two double rates and half a single rate when there is a single child.

Due to space limitations in the bedrooms it is not possible for two (or

more) adults to share with a child, or an adult to share with more than one child in a standard room. The larger rooms, which are more expensive, do have a sofa-bed, but the hotel recommends that they are not really suitable for a child over about eight years old.

When sharing a twin room with a child the adult will be charged at the single rate, rather than the double rate, as there is only one paying person occupying the room.

*Richard Crawshaw*

Richard can be reached by email at [hotel@illustrious.org.uk](mailto:hotel@illustrious.org.uk)  
or by post at:  
Richard Crawshaw, 114 Bassnage Road, Halesowen, United Kingdom B63 4HF

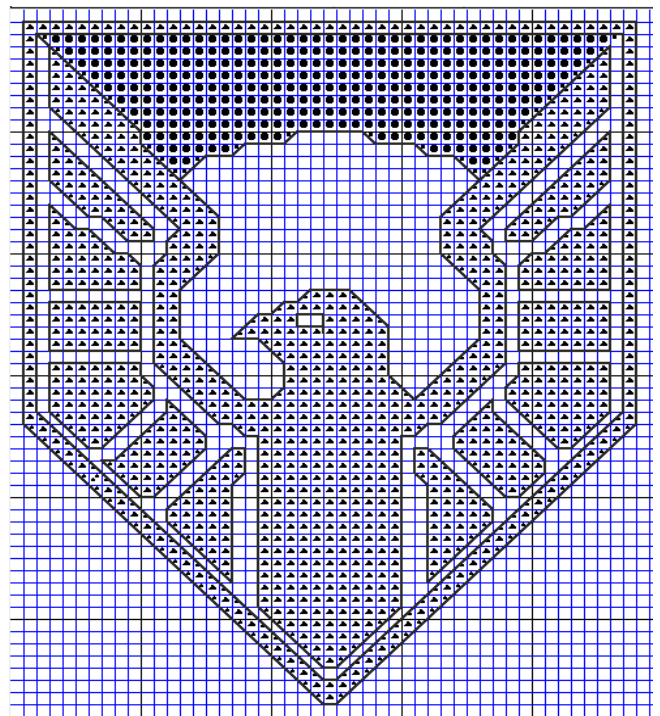
## **Stitch the Illustrious Logo!**

### *DIY Embroidered patches*

Various people have asked us if we'll be doing embroidered patches of the Illustrious logo. We're looking into this, but in the meantime if you fancy having a go at embroidering it yourself then here's the pattern charted for cross stitch.

The triangles are done in dark blue (eg. DMC 791/ANCHOR 177) and the circles are done in mid grey (eg. DMC 451/ANCHOR 234). Outlining should be done in either black (eg. DMC 310/ANCHOR 403) or dark grey (eg. DMC 3799/ANCHOR 235). The pattern is 47 stitches across by 57 stitches high, which comes out as just under 3.5 inches by 4 inches when stitched on 14-count canvas.

*Nik Whitehead*





# OLYMPUS2012

## GUESTS OF HONOUR

GEORGE RR MARTIN

PAUL CORNELL

STEPH SWAINSTON

## FAN GUESTS OF HONOUR

MARGARET AUSTIN & MARTIN EASTERBROOK

THE 2012 UK SF EASTERCON

APRIL 6TH – 9TH 2012

RADISSON EDWARDIAN HOTEL

HEATHROW – LONDON



[WWW.OLYMPUS2012.ORG](http://WWW.OLYMPUS2012.ORG)

## 2011 Beyond Cyberdrome — Seige!

We're very lucky that the Convention Executive changes each year. It keeps things 'fresh'.

After all, without the Convoy / Contemplation request for 'A BC Event but not actually BC' we'd never have had 'Beyond Cyberdrome the Radio Panel Game': 'I'm sorry I haven't a robot', in which Ian Watson showed the 'Just a Minute' team how it's *really* done.

If it wasn't for Orbital's request for 'Beyond Cyberdrome, but nothing involving violence or any sort of conflict', we'd never have had 'The Great Exhibition' in which sewer rats were decorticated to operate Mr Bazalgette's sewer cleansing robots.



If it hadn't been for Odyssey's request that we 'Venture into new, unexplored, areas', we might never have broken through into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dimension with 'BC: 3D' where Tim Kirk broke the second law of thermodynamics, using string.

And this year, the Executive have been clear.

"Blood. Damage. Violence. Carnage. Crushing of enemies, driving them before, like cattle, and to hear the lamentation of their women" ... or something like that.

I'm a little vague about the details. The Red Mist, y'know.

I always felt Beyond Cyberdrome had All Gone Horribly Wrong the very first year when our plans for a life-size recreation of Beyond Thunderdome had been abandoned at the last moment due to not being able to get the Thunderdome into the Heathrow Hotel pool area (let alone the sharks).

Since then, we'd been stuck with those ruddy 'robots' which, frankly, I feel has been holding BC back from its full potential for years now.

But now, finally we can explore the Human Condition in all its richness and sensitivity.

Just arm the families and pit the children against the parents.

Simple. Classic. Can't fail.



But, like the bleeding heart engineer that he is, Alex had doubts.

"We need the robots", he said "It's the robots people come for."

"Nonsense," I explained to him carefully, in all the patronising tones that BA graduates are trained to use when talking to BSc graduates. (It's a good idea to use these tones now and again 'cos that is pretty much the *whole* of what BA Graduates learn.) "No, my dear good fellow. You fail to appreciate the cunningly wrought *artistry* of it all. What people *really* come for is to see Eira and I wear silly clothes and hear me shout incoherently over the clockwork-and-battery-operated action.



"That and, maybe, on a bad year, the carnage..."

"No" said Alex, with that firm quiet logic of his. "I've been watching it for some years now and it's definitely the robots."



"Not the costumes?"

"Maybe if it's Eira," said Alex (Was he being, tactful to me? Surely not! This man builds *lathes*!) "And, maybe *some* costumes... but not yours."

So, it's robots again. Sorry about that. I would love to give you the full panoply of ligament-tearing Humanity, but Alex says we have to have robots, and without Alex, nothing is going to get organised — let alone built.

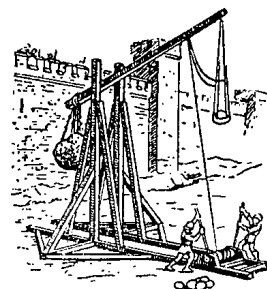
So, bearing in mind the staggering success of 'BC 3D' and of 'BC: The Great Exhibition' (in which Alex and Bazooka knocked up a quick City of the Future out of stuff Blue Peter had thrown out) we're going to build a 3D structure and there will be two teams: One to destroy it and one to defend it from destruction.

Originally I'd suggested this be 'Kids versus Parents' but Alex, once again, had a quiet word.

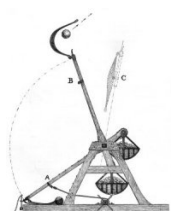
"It would be over in minutes," he said, "the kids will slaughter them. And, anyhow, most people who enter BC don't have kids".

So there you go.

It's going to be like a Games Workshop tabletop battle — but bigger — with siege engines, buildings that collapse, combat engines that fall apart with shrapnel that'll blind half the audience, screams of the dying, flames and smoke that'll sear the throat, and, yes, just to keep the Executive happy, we shall have blood, damage, violence, Carnage, crushing of enemies, driving them before, like cattle, and to hear the lamentation of their women.



We need Seige Engines, we need Defence Engines, we need cohorts of footrobots, willing to give their lives for a pointless gesture. We need Catapults and Ballistas and Onagers and we might well need some walls that fall to pieces easily. We need a lot of little Archimedes-es. Maybe even a Sauron or two.

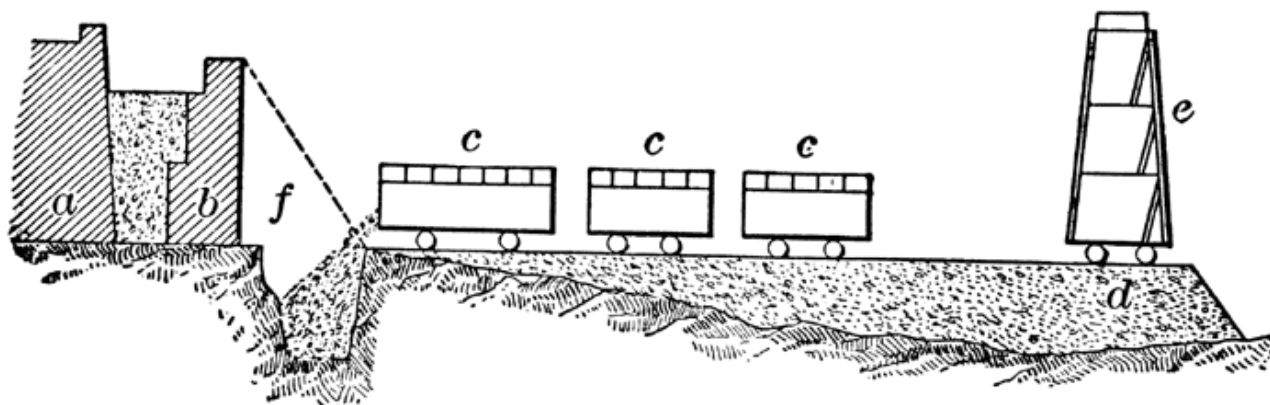


And we're going to lie to Health and Safety.  
Bring the kids. They'll love it.

Of course, if anyone wants to have a punch-up in the car-park afterwards...

*Smuzz*

Beyond Cyberdrome is produced by Alex Holden, Smuzz and Eira with — whenever they forget to run away — Bazooka and Tim Kirk. Many other people help too but Smuzz is too utterly out of touch to realise. Actually, Alex did a BEng, but BA's can't tell the difference between them and BSc's because they're not colour-coded.



# Space Art — Inspirations

## *SF Art Through the Ages — the early years*

Today's SF and magazine covers feature spaceships and suited figures, often with the planets and moons of our, and other, solar systems merely background, and we are familiar with photographs beamed back from space probes and surface Rovers.

In the years of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, any illustrations of space were derived from sketches done at telescope eyepiece, or from blurry photographs taken through the best instruments of the day. Astronomers wrote books and magazine articles describing space in ways that would bring its wonders to the general public, but some scenes could only be portrayed by art alone, aided by the artist's imagination. For instance, if the readers were able to stand on the surface of the Moon, or of Mars, what would they see?

Thus was born the 'Space Artist'; sometimes their work would influence many others — and even History itself!

**Lucien Rudaux** (1874 – 1947) was a popular French astronomer/ artist whose interplanetary views, in colour or black-and-white, enchanted youngsters and adults alike during the 1920s and 1930s, prompting some to emulate his work in later years. Examples of this inspirational trend surfaced on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean during the 1940s in the shape of two very different persons, Chesley Bonestell and R. A. Smith.

**Ralph A. Smith** (1905 – 1959) produced artwork showing Britons how the future (British?) path of space exploration could develop, with space vehicles extrapolated from the German V-2 rocket, although he had also produced designs in earlier pre-war years for the British Interplanetary Society. His various skills were largely self-taught — a surprisingly common trait of not a few space artists, although the majority attended art schools to learn the craft of illustration.

Initially an architectural and interior design artist, he so expanded his skills that he changed to purely mechanical design, becoming Leading Draughtsman in a factory built from plans that he had drawn up years earlier! As a practical experimenter, he favoured the 'hardware' side of



space art rather than the purely astronomical one, often working out the design detail of his spaceships before beginning to paint them.

Working with **H. E. Ross** in the late 1940s, he illustrated a rocket that was planned to send a man 305km (183 miles) into space on a sub-orbital trajectory with parachute recovery of the pilot's cockpit. The two submitted this proposal to the Ministry of Supply — who evinced complete disinterest in the thing!

Only in the 1960s did the Mercury–Redstone flights approach the same capability, and that indirectly stemmed from the partnership of a German rocket-scientist and an American space artist.

The influence of **Chesley Bonestell** (1888 — 1986) can be summed up by the comment made by a space artist in later years (about the picture 'Saturn seen from Titan'): "...the painting that launched a thousand careers..." — not only of artists, but also aerospace engineers, scientists and authors. (This from **Arthur C. Clarke**: "...Chesley's paintings had a colossal impact on my thinking about space travel...")

Bonestell began to paint astronomical scenes after viewing the planet Saturn through a large telescope at the age of 17 (this painting was lost in the fire that raged through San Francisco following the Earthquake of 1906). Although his interest in space art had been whetted, he joined a well-known firm of architects, becoming Chief Designer after only two years. In 1932, his images of how the completed Golden Gate Bridge would look aided its Chief Engineer's meetings with the Bridge's financiers. (One picture is clearer than technical engineering blueprints!) He even made several contributions to the final appearance during construction.

Aged 50, he changed careers, becoming a 'matte painter' with film studios such as RKO, 20th Century Fox, MGM (hated it, and left after one week!), Warner Bros., Columbia and Paramount. [For reasons of cost, actors only worked against part of a building — constructed on the sound-stage — while a matte painter worked on a sheet of glass that, when placed in front of the camera lens, gave the impression the entire building was there.]

In this capacity, Bonestell worked on *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Citizen Kane*, and many other films. This experience stood him in good stead when he painted the background to

scenes on the lunar surface in George Pal's film *Destination Moon*.

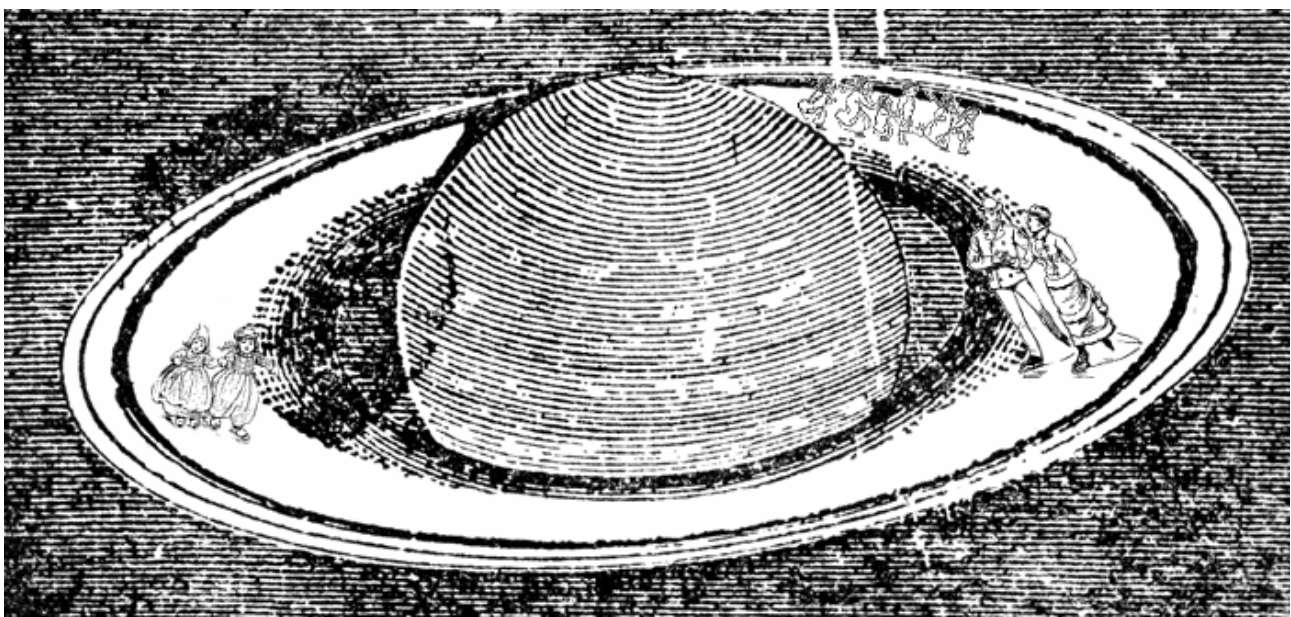
Pal chose Bonestell as a result of seeing his work in books and magazines, and that phase of his life was triggered by sending his Saturn pics to Life magazine — purely on his own initiative. The magazine bought them at once for a reputed \$30,000 and they published them later that year, 1944. They hit the world like an atomic bomb! Included in the 1949 book *Conquest of Space*, his work reached a wider public when the book became a best-seller.

In 1952 the influential Collier's magazine included a series telling of possibly conquering space using the technology of the day, with illustrations depicting possible vehicles designed by Wernher von Braun, all painted by Bonestell and artists Rolf Klep, Fred Freeman. This series convinced politicians, taxpayers, technicians, scientists and the military that it could be done, eventually leading to the U.S. space programme.

Truly launching a thousand careers — and influencing History.

While Bonestell was being hailed as "...the Grand Master of Astronomical Artists..." in America, a new talent was dawning in Birmingham, England, in the person of **David A. Hardy** — your Artist Guest of Honour at this Convention — and I'm sure he will be delighted to tell you all about it!

*Ed Buckløy*





...the next giant leap



Guest of Honour  
**Charles Stross**

Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow  
25-26th February 2012

[www.satellite3.org.uk](http://www.satellite3.org.uk)

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## *Live Role Playing game at Illustrious*

### ***Here's how it is...***

*Earth-that-was got used up. We moved out — terraformed and colonized hundreds of new earths; some, rich and flush with the new technologies; some, not so much. The central planets — them as formed the Alliance — decided all the planets had to join under their rule.*

*There was some disagreement on that point.*

*After the Unification War, many of the Independents who had fought and lost drifted to the edges of civilization, far from Alliance control. Out here, people struggle to get by with the most basic of technologies. A ship will bring you work; a gun will help you keep it.*

*A captain's goal is simple:*

***find crew, find a job... keep flying.***

The Firefly Live Role Playing (LRP) game at Illustrious 2011, based on the Serenity Role Playing Game (RPG) by Jamie Chambers adapted for live play, is your opportunity to experience the world of Joss Whedon's Firefly first hand. No knowledge of the game is required.

Players will take on the roles of the crew of several small ships similar to the *Serenity* or other characters from the 'verse and will have the opportunity to make deals and find work while trying to stay under the radar of the Alliance ... Fly a ship out in the black, take jobs as they come, and always make sure you get paid!

The game will run during several 2-hour sessions over the course of the Eastercon weekend. Players do not need to attend every session to be able to take part in the game, although of course if you miss a session you will miss out on some of the fun!

We are looking for several enthusiastic players to take on the roles of captains of the ships. Captains will have the opportunity to organise their own crews of 6-10 other players. If you are interested in playing a captain, please contact us in advance at **FireflyLRP@gmail.com** to discuss your role. We are also happy to hear from other players in advance, or for players to simply turn up at the first session of the weekend. As we are limited to a maximum number of participants we are limited as to how many captains and other players we can take on. Places will be given on a first-come-first-served basis.

More information can be found online at [www.illustrious.org.uk](http://www.illustrious.org.uk).

# SF Media Through the Ages

## *Part One: 1900 to 1980*

*This topic (dealing with all 3 forms of media SF) is so vast that Dave Lally's choice of items within this huge area and his comments about them are very selective — and are solely his own views (and not necessarily those of Illustrious).*

We are looking at the world of media SF (which chronologically means cinema, radio and TV). By 1911, the first had already been established — the Lumiere Brothers having exhibited silent film in Paris and then in 1899 in London<sup>1</sup>.

Regarding the second, Hertz's work on the electromagnetic spectrum, followed up by Morse and his Code were already being further developed by Marconi and his "wireless" transmitters (which actually broadcast voice and music not just Morse's blips). In fact radio and cinema were almost contemporaries of one another.

The third was still in the realms of pure SF — engineers had yet then to overcome the problems of how to scan in pictures, and of bandwidth (too much information to carry, compared to radio).

[Also just 100 years ago this year, the Harland and Wolf riveters were hard at work in Belfast, Ireland, building the superstructure on the recently laid keel of a soon-to-be-technological marvel. Morse's code would be used one year later in April 1912 — with the new S-O-S Morse Code — when that marvel (the Titanic), met and lost to nature (the iceberg) on a moonless and very bitterly cold, but calm Atlantic Ocean. Board of Trade lifeboat rules were soon updated as a result of that tragedy.]

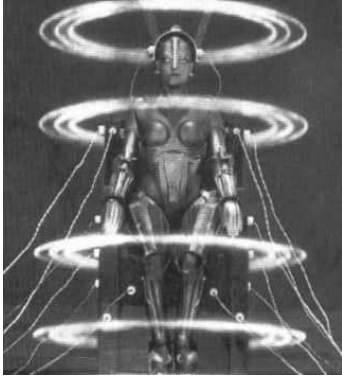
### **Before and during the the 1920s:**

SF and SF-related media was — in the main — silent cinema. Included in that period we have of course the now famous film *Le Voyage de la Lune* by Melies. That picture of the rocket nosecone inserted in the eye of the Man on The Moon has become iconic.



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<sup>1</sup> There is a plaque on the Westminster University site just north of Oxford Circus Tube Station to commemorate that first London showing there — on the way to BBC's Broadcasting House.



But we also had an early *Frankenstein* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and even *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. *Aelita* appeared (to inspire future Russian SF cons by its name) in 1924 but the pinnacle in that early period was of course Fritz Lang's 1927 *Metropolis* (and it has been recently re-issued with extra, long-lost, footage on DVD).

[Early experiments were now also under way by a Scottish engineer called Baird (in Hastings) and by a Russian emigre called Zworykin (based in the States), beginning what was later to turn into TV. Their two different systems were to compete in the following decade. Other engineers like Oberth (in Germany) and Goddard (in the US) began experimenting with rockets. Their early work — progressed by others — was to bring fruit in the 1950s and 1960s.]

## The 1930s:

Cinema produced sound and we had two superb items from the H G Wells/Korda team: *Brave New World* (the futuristic design aspects in that are truly excellent although using a cannon to go to the moon was probably not appropriate) and *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* (in the end, the main character forget that stopping the Earth in its motion would have a problem: momentum). Also in that era, the first *King Kong* and the first *The Invisible Man*, plus *The Bride of Frankenstein*, appeared. In the US, cinema serials like *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers* enthralled audiences.



Radio SF got a boost when a (later award-winning) actor scared the eastern seaboard of the US (despite frequent warnings to listeners that it was merely a fictional drama). Orson Welles's *War of the Worlds* play (based on H G Wells' work) on American radio in 1938 was sufficiently authentic to cause panic.

[By this time developments in cinema included Technicolour and later the screen-stretching Cinemascope. In television, progress in line scanning techniques and the cathode ray tube allowed advancements in TV to proceed even further. Not only were the UK and US developing it but so also were France and Germany<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The Nazis had a crude TV service on in Berlin during WWII.



However the UK-based electro-mechanical 240-line system (Baird's) lost to EMI/Marconi's 405-line electronic one (Zworykin's). Despite that, Baird did achieve at that time, progress in other aspects of TV: large-screen projection, early colour and even crude 3D! In late 1936, the BBC produced the first high-definition public TV service using the electronic system (Band I, VHF, B+W, 405 lines) though TV sets were astronomical in price and only very rich Londoners could watch it on very small screens from the only transmitter (Alexandra Palace)<sup>3</sup>.

There was some TV SF but no easy way of recording it.]

### **The 1940s:**

Cinema of course turned to WWII and just after it, SF films such as *A Matter of Life and Death* (with the David Niven character assuming a heavenly aspect) and *The Perfect Woman* emerged. In the States we had radio SF in the *Superman* serials and TV SF with *Captain Video*.



[Great advances in electronics in WWII allowed TV to progress — especially in the States where the War didn't inhibit matters. Meanwhile a band of highly intelligent people — chess players amongst them — gathered in great secrecy at a small UK town called Bletchley, half-way between Oxford and Cambridge Universities, to unravel the Nazi Enigma codes (the naval one being the most difficult). Amongst that especial elite, Turing advanced his ideas on computers and proposed the computer versus man Test that bears his name to this day. Indeed the very first computing machines (eg. Colussus and ENIAC) emerged then. Also in 1948 a budding SF writer called Clarke suggested that if an Equator-aligned satellite could be sent up so far that it took exactly 24 hrs to go round, it would be stationary vis-a-vis the earth and communications might be sent via it. His suggestion was to take root in the 60s and 70s.]

### **The 1950s:**

With the post WWII era (and especially with the emergence of a Cold as opposed to a Hot War in Europe), there was an explosion — mainly from the

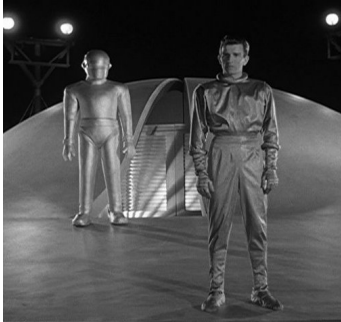


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<sup>3</sup> On 1 Sept 1939 in the middle of a B+W Walt Disney Mickey Mouse cartoon, BBC TV pulled the plug without warning: Germany had invaded Poland. They assumed the Alexandra Palace transmitter might direct German bombers. Interestingly, 7 years later the BBC resumed TV with the same cartoon (though they started back at the beginning!).



US — in the number of SF/Bug Eyed Monster etc. movies. The view that these were substitutes for the “reds under the beds” (or even in the beds) has been well vented.



But within that period some fine film SF appeared. Examples here are *Destination Moon*, *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (Klaatu Barada Nikto), *When Worlds Collide*, *Invasion of The Body Snatchers* and two with great SFX for the time: *War of the Worlds* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man*.

Two films, *The Blob* and *The Fly*, were so successful that sequels emerged. Even the post war Japanese film industry (which was to astound us much later in the 1980s with Anime) gave us the fire breathing monster *Godzilla*.

In 1956 the pinnacle was achieved with MGMs Technicolour / Cinemascope film *Forbidden Planet* (a chain of well known UK SF bookshops are named after it). With a mechanical robot, who could reproduce gallons of liquor without blinking an cogged eyelid (great to have at an SF party!), a lovely female heroine (Anne Francis) and a very young Leslie Nielsen (both very recently and sadly late), that film set a benchmark for that period<sup>4</sup>.



Many movie turkeys emerged; especially notable was *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. In that decade Political SF (my own area of great interest) was covered by films such as *On the Beach* (from the States) and *Twelve Days to Noon* (from the UK). We also had high suspenseful horror in *Night of The Demon*.

On radio, there emerged the *Journey Into Space* series, while the newly started Radio Luxembourg (on 208m) was giving us *Dan Dare — Pilot of the Future*.



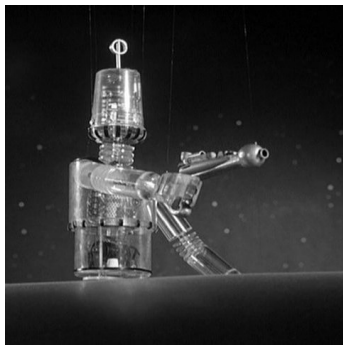
On UK TV, the BBC's Nigel Kneale was putting out the *Quatermass* series, and with the arrival of BBC's Radiophonic Workshop sound effects unit, the last BBC one in 1959 (*Quatermass and the Pit*) cleared

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<sup>4</sup> Those same space suits were used a few years later in another SF film — this time a true and early “turkey”, *Queen of Outer Space* with Zsa Zsa Gabor).



the streets (and all 3 are now available on high quality BBC DVD). The BBC's TV monopoly was challenged by the new ITV and we had superb US imports like *The Twilight Zone* (with host Rod Serling smoking himself to death on screen). Also on UK, TV two puppet series were broadcast — the first *Space Patrol* (with Larry Dart and Galosphere 347) disappeared for aeons and then re-emerged on DVD. The 2nd was the beginning of a long series of SF action puppet shows by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson (*Torchy* and also *Twizzle*) going on into the 60s and 70s with increasing levels of sophistication (and "Supermarionation"!) such as *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray*<sup>5</sup> and *Thunderbirds*.



[Cinema and radio tried to rally against the threat of TV — especially since US TV went into colour early (their National Television Systems Committee (NTSC) producing it in the late 1950s<sup>6</sup>.

Early professional video recording techniques on very high speed tape arrived with VERA (in the UK) and AMPEX (in the States) but their cost was very high — and in the UK, BBC were to continue to "wipe" some taped drama much to their chagrin many years later, when many of those those shows (not just SF) became "cult".]

## The 1960s:

If the 50s could be called the "golden age" of written SF (eg. Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein, Bradbury, etc.) then certainly this period could be called "media" SF's golden era.

On film we had *Village of The Damned* (based on Wyndham's work), the under-rated *The Day The Earth Caught Fire*<sup>7</sup>, and of course, that decade's two benchmarks: *2001 A Space Odyssey*<sup>8</sup> and *Dr Strangelove* (and all made in the UK).



- 5 *Stingray* was the very first all colour UK TV series (made for the colour US market whilst UK TV was still in B+W).
- 6 Often known, due its crude colour method applied upon the existing US 525-line system, as "Never Twice the Same Colour". The far superior PAL (Phase Alternate Line) European 625-line system (Band III, UHF) only came in the mid 60s (including starting the new BBC2 in B+W in 1964). But it meant the end of the B+W 405-line method. UK TV only went into PAL colour experimental test mode on BBC2 in in 1967 (Wimbledon tennis) — all UK TV (including ITV) had turned to full colour by the mid 1970s.
- 7 The then-recently retired Daily Express editor simply reprised his role in the film (and very convincing he was too).
- 8 In MGM's North London Borehamwood Studios, *2001* took up most of the sound stages. For a while McGoohan's great TV epic took up the sole remaining one. So two major SF related shows — for a while — shared the same Studio.

# **NOVACON 41**

**Guest of Honour  
John Meaney**

**11.11.11 - 13.11.11**

**The Park Inn Nottingham**

**Membership of Novacon 41 is currently £40.00**

Novacon is the UK's longest-established regional science fiction convention, held every autumn since 1971. It's built around a single-stream programme mixing both literary items and more informal events, with deliberate emphasis on social contact between sf fans and genre professionals.

**[www.novacon.org.uk](http://www.novacon.org.uk)**

From the States, we had *Fail Safe*, *The Birds*, *The Time Machine* (loved the stop-photography with the fashions changing year-on-year on the shop mannequin), political SF in *Seven Days in May*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, and the superb *Seconds*; and then horror in Romero's *Night of The Living Dead*.



What-if SF appeared in the controversial *It Happened Here* (the Nazi takeover of UK in 1941). *Barbarella*<sup>9</sup> arrived to tempt us.

Then there was *Planet of The Apes*, *Marooned*, and the beginnings in film of 007 James Bond, with ever increasing SF aspects (due to the gadgets). There was also emerging Continental SF such as *Alphaville* from France.

A huge explosion occurred in TV SF. *The Outer Limits* and *The Invaders*<sup>10</sup> came from the US, as did a show with a Canadian actor called Shatner playing a Starship Captain called Kirk (itself to produce a very long and successful franchise in both TV and film). In the UK we had overlaps in the SF/Fantasy/Espionage area. Not only did Patrick McGoochan in *Danger Man* (*Secret Agent* in the US) out-Bond Bond on the little screen (with his equipment) but we also had the fantasy series *The Avengers*. That was to reach the greatest heights in the B+W Emma Peel (Diana Rigg) series and went on — with Steed's partners ever changing — into colour and into 1969. (John Steed's TV show by the way celebrates 50 years in 2011.) BBC counter-attacked with *Adam Adamant Lives!* A BBC2 TV producer called Grotorex was so shocked at the UK VAT-man's powers (exceeding even that of the Police to enter your home) that he wrote *1990* with Barbara Kellerman in the Home Office Department of Public Control and the late Edward Woodward as



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<sup>9</sup> The pop group Duran Duran took their name from one of the film's characters.

<sup>10</sup> The group "Stiff Little Fingers" took their name from the alien beings in the show. Otherwise humanlike, their little finger couldn't bend (and they died in a puff of smoke leaving only a ground shadow).

the rebellious journalist<sup>11</sup>.

The BBC commissioned a UK post-nuclear attack scenario in *The War Game*, only to ban it from broadcast in 1964 until 1985.



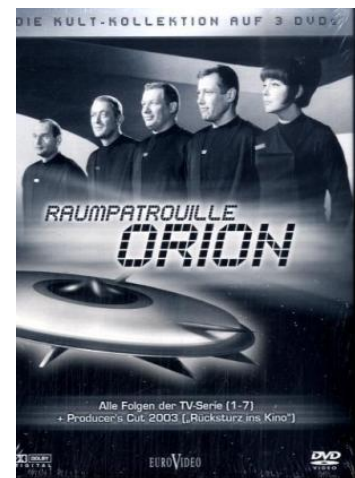
The arrival of a BBC Timelord from Gallifrey was delayed by 30 minutes on UK TV on 23 November 1963 (due to the Kennedy assassination the day before in Dallas — with extra long news items). Dr Who was to scare us behind the sofa for about 30 years, then to be discarded, then to be brought back in the 2000s with great acclaim. McGoohan's post-*Danger Man* ground-breaking epic *The Prisoner*<sup>8</sup> set new standards in SF related TV (and brought many visitors to the wonderful Portmeirion). Dedicated

fen like me can still follow news about it — over 40 years on — on [www.theunmutual.co.uk](http://www.theunmutual.co.uk). Gerry Anderson ended the decade with (in my view) still his best TV show, now model and live-action based (the puppets having been discarded): *UFO*.

There emerged in the mid 60s (and with only a fraction of Star Trek's budget) a cult German TV show called *Spaceship Orion* (based on the Perry Rhodan concept)<sup>12</sup>.

[In real life, the actions of Von Braun (a German emigre, now in the US) and Korolev (in the USSR) went head to head in the Space Race. The arrival of the simple bleeping Sputnik I in earth orbit in Oct 1957 caused US panic (their first satellite, Explorer 1, only got space-borne some time later). This was to be repeated by the Soviets a short time later with Sputnik II (with the very first mammal in space: the dog Laika).

Further US panic in the newly formed NASA occurred when Yuri Gagarin went up for a full orbit in mid 1961. Alan Shepherd only went up a few days later in a sub orbital flight: the US's first full orbit only happening in 1962 with John Glenn. But the US eventually won with Von Braun's Saturn rocket resulting in the the July 1969 Moon Landing. Also Clarke's '48 vision of satellite TV across continents began to take shape — at first with payloads having short orbits and time-spans (eg Telstar) and later with Earth synchronous-orbits which gave 24 hour access.]



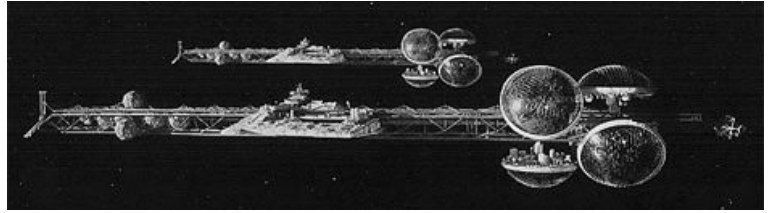
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<sup>11</sup> This show was never DVD released (and should be). Showings have occurred at UK Cons.

<sup>12</sup> It has been shown at UK Cons (only in German) but now with English subtitles it is ripe for re-showing.

## The 1970s:

Increasingly issues surrounding the environment / pollution / overcrowding



began to creep into film and TV SF. On the big screen we had Huey, Dewey and Louis in *Silent Running*, post-apocalypse scenarios in *No Blade of Grass*, and people eating in *Soylent Green* (from the wonderful Harry Harrison book *Make Room Make Room*), whilst on UK TV we had Kit Pedlar's *Doomwatch* (with plastic-eating spores and giant rats).

From US TV we had *Six Billion Dollar Man* and (the lovely ex-Miss America in) *Wonder Woman*. Political SF emerged in *The Parallax View* on the big screen, whilst two UK TV Political SF shows were shown in Great Britain but banned in Northern Ireland: *The Guardians*<sup>13</sup> and the revived and now growing cult of *The Prisoner*<sup>14</sup>. A certain writer (who later penned *Jurassic Park*) had his first film success with *The Andromeda Strain*<sup>15</sup>.



Michael Crichton followed this up with *Westworld* and the sequel *Futureworld*. John Carpenter (one of my favourites) began with *Dark Star*, Stephen Spielberg began with *Duel*, and George Lucas began with *THX 1138*. They were to produce even better SF later. A strictly virtuous Scottish policeman (Edward Woodward) searched "for a missing child" on Summerisle (actually SW Scotland) only to find himself burnt as a pagan offering in *The Wicker Man*. *The Stepford Wives* reminded us of loss of individuality, whilst *Logan's Run* reminded us of our

limited life span. *Close Encounters of The Third Kind* told us of Alien encounters (probably beneficent) whilst *Alien* (and its sequels in the 1980s) told us of a far more nasty kind. In 1977 a new benchmark

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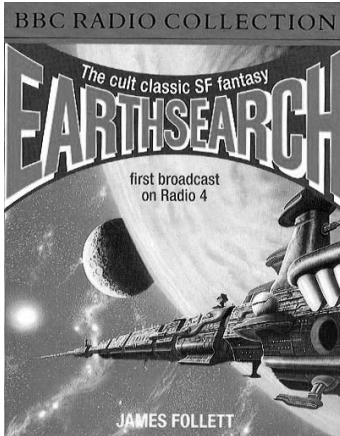
<sup>13</sup> *The Guardians* (LWT) (about a fascist UK state) has only now been released on DVD.

<sup>14</sup> N Ireland fans could have seen McGoon's show — made in colour but still shown in B+W on UK TV — in its 1st run in the late 60s on Ulster TV. Some — in border areas — could later pick up the 1979 showing of the McGoon epic on RTE (which this writer arranged), but most had to await Channel 4's UK-wide 1983-1984 showing to catch the political undercurrents of No 6.

<sup>15</sup> One of the earliest "product placement" films (note the cameras scanning the Univac computers etc.). Ask me at a Con about the way they got the chimps to "die" without breaking the American Humane Association rules.



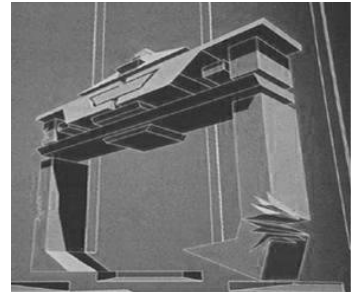
came with an (assumed) low budget SF UK-based film — using an out of work actor-turned-carpenter (Harrison Ford) in the main role. In a Galaxy Far Away, George Lucas' *Star Wars* burst upon the scene — with that long, long spacecraft intro — and SF media was never the same again.



On Radio we had *Earthsearch* and its sequel. But for Radio SF humour, it was a BBC Radio 4 series by a young Dr Who scriptwriter in the very late 1970s (whilst he had been backpacking and looking up at the stars) that gave us sheer SF bliss. With a follow up in more radio, then books, then a TV show and then (sadly) a mediocre Film, the SF world turned to Vogon Poetry, "42", towels and (my favourite) the Vlurggs. Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* with superb sound effects was a joy to listen to. One can still follow news on this fantastic (but now alas late) writing talent on [www.zz9.org](http://www.zz9.org). For humour on the big screen we had *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

The following decade (the 1980s) was to see the use of computers in Special Effects (SFX) emerge like never before.

[Video recording techniques became available for home use but was expensive. Format wars between Phillips VCR, Sony's Betamax and JVCs Video Home System resulted in a win for JVC/VHS but Sony had the last laugh with their Betamax-derived Betacam professional system. Laserdisks with superb vision came but also went.]



*Dave Lally*

(Dave Lally continues in PR3 with his views from 1980 to date.)

Dave Lally handled the Video Programmes for Worldcons 1990 (The Hague), 1995 and 2005 (Glasgow). He also did the same for most UK NatCons (Eastercons) between 1991-2005. He has continued this role for all the Octocons (Irish NatCons) now in their 21st year, for the last 20 of the Novacons (now in their 41st year) and recently for Newcons. His speciality is Political SF. Since 2005, to keep him out of SF mischief, he has chaired ESFS (The European SF Society-home of the Eurocons — The European SF Conventions (2011: Stockholm, 2012: Zagreb): [www.esfs.info](http://www.esfs.info).

# Membership List

As of 1600 hours on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2010, we have 576 members (including guests), and 6 apocryphals.

This list contains the names of those members who have joined since PR1, and who did not express a wish for their names to be withheld from publications.

If the preference was for badgename only, that is shown. If the preference is for both and a badgename has been given, the badgename appears after the real name in brackets. Otherwise the real name appear. Names are sorted as far as possible by surname or apparent surname.

Type	No.	Name	Type	No.	Name
A	575	Paul Allwood	A	598	Fraser McGinnis (Black Knight)
A	558	Neil Beynon	A	559	Gemma Morgan (Gem)
A	563	Simon Bradshaw	A	579	Darren Nash
A	587	Matt Brooker	A	581	Charlie Panayiotou
A	562	Sean Chatterton	A	583	Sharon Reamer
A	568	Colin	A	578	Gillian Redfearn
A	574	Michael Cule	A	601	Steve Rogerson (Steve Rogerson)
A	572	Emma Jane Davies	A	590	Amanda Rutter (Amanda (Floor to Ceiling Books))
A	591	Robert Day	A	567	Shana
A	593	Steven Dean (Steve Dean)	A	565	Mike Shevdon
A	557	jan howard finder (THE WOMBAT)	A	561	Harpal Singh
A	586	Lynn Fotheringham	A	580	Simon Spanton
A	585	Jim	A	573	Christopher Teague (chris@pendragonpress.net)
A	597	Mark Frampton	A	595	James Treadwell
A	594	Toby Frost (Toby Frost)	A	560	Tobes Valois
A	553	Marc Gascoigne (Marc Gascoigne - Angry Robot)	A	566	Dale Williamson
A	552	Lee Harris	A	600	Andrew J. Wilson
J	584	Alex Hinzen	APO	569	Zmi
A	603	Alex Holden			
A	577	Janet Jenkins			
A	576	Andy Jenkins			
A	602	Richard Kennaway			
A	571	Rochita Loenen-Ruiz			
A	589	Anne Lyle			
A	570	Peter Mabey			
A	588	Cristina Macía			
A	582	Craig Marnoch			
A	564	Siân Martin			
A	596	Sophia McDougall			

## Membership Types

G	Guest
A	Attending Member
YA	Young Adult
J	Junior
C	Child
I	Infant
APO	Apocryphal (Toys,Mascots)



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Ian McDonald

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